

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 CU-02 AF-06 NEA-09 ERDA-05

CIAE-00 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-01

PM-03 PRS-01 SAJ-01 SAM-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

TRSE-00 NSC-05 ACDA-05 BIB-01 DODE-00 /100 W

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R 211518Z MAR 75

FM USMISSION GENEVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1561

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L GENEVA 1980

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CSCE, PFOR, XG

SUBJECT: CSCE POLICY: PEACEFUL CHANGE -- GERMAN TRANSLATION PROBLEM

REF: GENEVA 1930

1. SUBSEQUENT TO TRANSMISSION OF REFTEL, SOVIET DEL HEAD (KOVALEV), WHO HAD HEARD OF REFTEL GERMAN TRANSLATION PROBLEM, WARNED US THAT SOVIETS WOULD CONSIDER AS "BLACKMAIL" ANY ATTEMPT TO ALTER SECRETARIAT'S GERMAN LANGUAGE TRANSLATION OF PEACEFUL CHANGE TEXT. KOVALEV URGED US TO LEAVE SECRETARIAT TRANSLATION ALONE AND LET FINAL GERMAN LANGUAGE VERSION BE DRAFTED BY INFORMAL GROUP OF FIVE GERMAN-SPEAKING DELEGATIONS, WHO NORMALLY WORK OUT AGREED GERMAN VERSIONS OF CSCE TEXTS.

2. FRG DEL HEAD (BLECH) MEANWHILE URGED US, AS SPONSORS OF PEACFUL CHANGE TEXT, TO ASK SECRETARIAT TO CIRCULATE A REVISED GERMAN VERSION ACCEPTABLE TO FRG. BLECH EXPLAINED THE BUNDESTAG FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE WOULD DISCUSS THIS QUESTION ON MARCH 21, AND IF OFFICIAL TRANSLATION OF PEACEFUL CHANGE TEXT WAS UNACCEPTABLE TO THEM THIS COULD CAUSE  
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FEDERAL GOVERNMENT POLITICAL PROBLEMS. BLECH AGREED THAT

EVENTUALLY INFORMAL GERMAN LANGUAGE GROUP WOULD HAVE TO AGREE ON GERMAN VERSION OF PEACEFUL CHANGE TEXT, BUT ASKED FOR INTERIM SOLUTION DESCRIBED ABOVE TO PRECLUDE POLITICAL PROBLEMS IN BONN.

3. WE TRIED TO FIND A MIDDLE POINT WHICH MIGHT SATISFY FRG AND SOVIETS, AND SUGGESTED THAT WE MIGHT ASK SECRETARIAT TO WITHDRAW PRESENT VERSION AND LEAVE ITS DRAFTING TO GERMAN LANGUAGE GROUP. THIS WOULD HAVE SATISFIED FRG'S NEEDS, BUT KOVALEV OBJECTED STRONGLY, SAYING SUCH AN ACTION WOULD BE WITHOUT PRECEDENT.

4. WHEN WE INFORMED BLECH OF SOVIET ATTITUDE TOWARD THIS POSSIBLE COURSE OF ACTION, HE SUGGESTED, AFTER CALLING VAN WELL, ALTERNATIVE POSSIBILITY UNDER WHICH FRG DEL WOULD MAKE ORAL RESERVATION IN PRINCIPLES SUBCOMMITTEE ON GERMAN LANGUAGE VERSION, AND ASKED THAT WE SUPPORT THEM ON THIS. LATER, BLECH CALLED US BACK TO SAY THAT VAN WELL HAD DECIDED IT WAS NOT REPEAT NOT NECESSARY TO TAKE ANY ACTION ON THIS PROBLEM PRIOR TO EASTER RECESS. FRG APPARENTLY FEELS THAT IT HAS MADE ITS POSITION CLEAR, AND CAN NOW TAKE THE MATTER UP IN CALMER CIRCUMSTANCES AFTER EASTER.

5. COMMENT. WHEN THIS PROBLEM ARISES AGAIN AFTER EASTER, WE ANTICIPATE THAT FRG WILL CONTINUE TO PRESS US STRONGLY TO TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN RESOLVING IT. IN VIEW OF EQUALLY STRONG SOVIET POSITION, WE WOULD OF COURSE LIKE TO AVOID SUCH A ROLE. HOWEVER, AS SPONSORS OF THE PEACEFUL CHANGE TEXT, WE HAVE SOME RESPONSIBILITY FOR DETERMINING IF TRANSLATIONS ACCURATELY REFLLECT THE INTENT OF THE PROPOSAL. FURTHERMORE, WE BELIEVE IT IS ONLY REALISTIC TO RECOGNIZE THAT THE FRG WILL FEEL THAT WE HAVE LEFT THEM IN THE LURCH IF, AFTER OBTAINING A SATISFACTORY FORMULATION ON THE FRG'S BEHALF, WE LEAVE THEM ALONE TO FIGHT FOR AN ACCEPTABLE GERMAN TRANSLATION. MOREOVER, THE ISSUE RAISED BY THE GERMAN TRANSLATION PROBLEM IS CLEARLY NOT SIMPLY ONE OF LANGUAGE. GDR REPS HAVE TOLD US PRIVATELY THAT THEIR INTERPRETATION OF ENGLISH TEXT IS THAT IT MAKES PEACEFUL CHANGES OF FRONTIERS SUBJECT TO THREE CONDITIONS: INTERNATIONAL LAW, PEACEFUL MEANS, AND

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AGREEMENT, AND THAT THEY WANT THIS REFLECTED IN GERMAN VERSION. WE HAVE POINTED OUT TO GDR DEL THAT ENGLISH VERSION CONTAINS AN ELEMENT OF AMBIGUITY ON THIS POINT, AND THAT THIS AMBIGUITY IS THE BASIS OF THE COMPROMISE.

6. WE WILL REPORT FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS AFTER EASTER AND SEEK GUIDANCE AS NECESSARY.  
END COMMENT. DALE

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